



ASTRAWAN INDONESIA

INDONESIAN WRITER



HAMSAD RANGKUTI

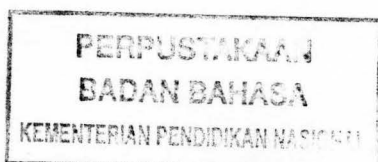
Prima Hadiah Sastra Asia Tenggara
wardee of the S.E.A. Write Award



PUSAT BAHASA
DEPARTEMEN PENDIDIKAN NASIONAL
2008



**Sastrawan Indonesia
Indonesian Writer**



Sastrawan Indonesia Indonesian Writer

HAMSAD RANGKUTI

Penerima Hadiah Sastra Asia Tenggara 2008

Awardee of the S.E.A. Write Award 2008

**Pusat Bahasa
Departemen Pendidikan Nasional
National Language Center
Ministry of National Education
Jakarta
2008**

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PUSAT BAHASA
DEPARTEMEN PENDIDIKAN NASIONAL

Buku ini disusun dalam rangka penyerahan Hadiah Sastra The S.E.A. Write Award 2008 oleh Putri Kerajaan Thailand Yang Mulia Maha Chakri Siridhorn, tanggal 30 September 2008, di Bangkok.

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KATA PENGANTAR
KEPALA PUSAT BAHASA
DEPARTEMEN PENDIDIKAN NASIONAL

Sejak tahun 1979 hadiah sastra The S.E.A Write Awards diberikan kepada sastrawan berprestasi di Asia Tenggara. Dalam hubungan itu, Pusat Bahasa, Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, setiap tahun membentuk Panitia Pemilihan Sastrawan Indonesia. Tugasnya memilih dan menentukan tiga orang sastrawan terbaik untuk tahun yang bersangkutan. Salah seorang dari mereka ditunjuk menjadi wakil sastrawan Indonesia untuk menerima The S.E.A. Write Awards dari pihak Kerajaan Thailand.

Tahun 2008 ini, Indonesia telah menetapkan sastrawan Hamsad Rangkuti untuk menerima hadiah itu. Dalam rangka penyerahan itu, Pusat Bahasa menyusun buku Sastrawan Indonesia Penerima Hadiah Sastra Asia Tenggara 2008 untuk keperluan upacara penyerahan The S.E.A. Write Awards di Bangkok, Thailand.

Kepada semua pihak yang telah mengupayakan penerbitan buku kecil ini, saya sampaikan penghargaan dan terima kasih yang tulus.

Jakarta, September 2008

Dr. Dendy Sugono

PREFACE
THE HEAD OF THE NATIONAL
LANGUAGE CENTER
MINISTRY OF NATIONAL EDUCATION

Since 1979 The S.E.A. Write Awards has been given to prolific writers in South East Asian countries. In relation to this, National Language Center, Ministry of National Education, every year sets up a committee for selection of Indonesian literary writers for the corresponding year. One of them is pointed to represent Indonesian writers to receive The S.E.A. Write Awards from the Kingdom of Thailand.

For year of 2008 Indonesia has chosen Hamsad Rangkuti as the recipient of the award. In this connection, the National Language Center has published the booklet *Sastrawan Indonesia Penerima Hadiah Sastra Asia Tenggara 2008* (Indonesian Writer: Awardee of the S.E.A. Write Award 2008) for the presentation of the award in Bangkok, Thailand.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere thanks to those who enabled this booklet to be published.

Jakarta, September 2008

Dr. Dendy Sugono

PIDATO PENERIMAAN THE SEA WRITE AWARD TAHUN 2008

Paduka Yang Mulia
Putri Kerajaan Thailand
Maha Chakri Siridhorn

Yang terhormat para menteri
Para duta besar,
Panitia Anugerah SEA Write Award,
Bapak-bapak dan Ibu-ibu sekalian

Sungguh saya merasa terhormat dan tersanjung menerima anugerah SEA Write Award ini bersama-sama dengan para pengarang Asia Tenggara lainnya. Saya tak pernah belajar bagaimana mengarang. Semuanya terjadi secara alamiah begitu saja

Saya mengarang sejak tahun 1959 ketika saya masih sekolah di sekolah menengah pertama. Hanya sebatas itulah kemampuan orang tua saya menyekolahkan saya karena dia hanya seorang buruh penjaga malam. Meskipun begitu, saya tetap memelihara kesukaan saya, yakni membaca. Saya suka membaca koran yang dilekatkan pemerintah kota di papan pajangan. Di sanalah saya menemukan karya-karya pengarang yang dimuat di koran minggu.

Keasyikan membaca memicu keinginan saya untuk membuat seperti apa yang saya baca. Tahun 1959, ketika saya berusia 16 tahun, lahirlah cerpen pertama saya "Nyanyian di Rambung Tua".

Pada tahun 1960 saya pindah ke Medan dan bekerja di kantor tentara. Sambil bekerja, saya terus mengarang. Cerpen kedua saya berjudul "Mesjid" dimuat di Waspada. Saya pun dicari-cari penulis senior karena warna cerpen saya berbeda dari cerpen-cerpen penulis remaja lainnya. Saya lalu berkesempatan mendiskusikan karya-karya saya dengan para pengarang senior kota kami. Mereka memberi saya buku-buku bacaan untuk mengembangkan kemampuan mengarang saya. Cerpen berikutnya, "Panggilan Rasul", membuka pintu karir saya. Cerpen itu menarik perhatian pra pengarang senior. Saya lalu diajak menghadiri Konperensi Karya-
wan Pengarang Indonesia di Jakarta sebagai pengarang termuda. Di Jakarta saya bertemu dengan para pengarang yang karya-karya sering saya baca. Saya senang bergaul dengan mereka; karenanya pada tahun 1965 saya memutuskan untuk pindah ke Jakarta.

Pada tahun 1966 terbit majalah sastra *Horison*. Cerpen saya "Panggilan Rasul" dimuat di nomor keempat majalah itu. Tahun 1969 Arief Budiman, redaktur senior, mengajak saya bergabung dengan majalah *Horison*. Di majalah itulah saya mengembangkan bakat saya. Pada tahun 1986 saya diangkat menjadi pemimpin redaksi majalah itu hingga saya mengundurkan diri pada tahun 2002.

Yang Mulia Putri Maha Chakri Siridhorn, Bapak dan Ibu sekalian, pada kesempatan ini izinkan saya menyampaikan terima kasih yang tulus atas SEA Write Award yang dianugerahkan kepada saya.

Jakarta, 1 Agustus 2008

Hamsad Rangkuti

ACCEPTANCE SPEECH OF THE S.E.A. WRITE AWARD 2007

Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn,
Ministers,
Ambassadors,
Committee of SEA Write Award,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I feel truly honored and privileged to receive this SEA Write Award together with other winners from South East Asia countries since I never learned formally how to write short stories. It comes naturally to me as result of acts of writing, which I have been doing consistently, for years and years. I am close to the ordinary people, because that is who I am. I am part of them, their culture, their anguish, their dreams and their problems.

I write since 1959, when I was still in junior high school. It was my highest education that my parents could afford because my father was only a night guard. However, I did not loose my one and only passion that is reading. I kept reading newspapers that attached on the municipal boards in our town where I could find many writers' works on Sunday's edition.

This passion of reading gave me the motivation to rewriting what I have read. In 1959, when I was only 16 years old, the *Indonesia Baru* newspaper published my first short story, "Nyanyian di Rambung Tua".

In 1960, I moved to Medan and worked in a military office. While doing this job, I keep on writing. *Waspada* newspaper, then, published my second short story, "Mesjid". The senior writers began to pay attention on my works because they were very different from those of other young writers. I then had chance to discuss my works with the senior writers of our town. They gave me many books to read so that I can develop my ability of writing. It was my next short story, "Panggilan Rasul", actually opened the gate to my writing career. Bless on this I could attend the Congress of Indonesian Writers in Jakarta as the youngest participant. There I have had chance to meet many writers whose works I have read before. I liked the way they communicate, so in 1965 I decided to move to Jakarta.

In 1966, *Horison*, the famous literature magazine in Indonesia, was established and published my short story "Panggilan Rasul" in its fourth number. In 1969, Arif Budiman, senior editor of *Horison*, asked me to work as corrector. This was actually the place where I learned how to write and during the time I was there, I wrote many of my works. Since 1986, I worked as Chief Editor until I resigned in 2002.

Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Siridhorn, Ladies and Gentlemen, on this occasion I would like to express my deepest gratitude for this acknowledgement. Thank you.

Jakarta, August 5, 2008

Hamsad Rangkuti

BIOGRAFI RINGKAS

Hamsad Rangkuti lahir 7 Mei 1943, di Titikuning, Medan, Sumatra Utara. Ayahnya seorang penjaga malam, ibunya seorang penjual buah di pasar dan buruh lepas pengumpul ulat di perkebunan tembakau.

Hamsad Rangkuti suka melamun dan berkhayal; lamunan dan khayalannya kemudian ia tuliskan ke dalam cerpen. Hamsad mengaku memperoleh bakat bercerita dari ayahnya. Bedanya, ayahnya bercerita secara lisan, Hamsad menuangkannya dalam bentuk tulisan.

Ketika remaja, Hamsad mempunyai minat baca yang tinggi. Karena tak mampu membeli koran, ia membaca koran di kantor wedana setempat. Dari sanalah ia berkenalan dengan karya para pengarang dunia seperti Anton Chekov, Ernest Hemingway, Maxim Gorky, dan O'Henry. Dari sana pulalah tumbuh dan berkembang bakat menulisnya. Cerpen pertamanya, "Sebuah Nyan-nyian di Rambung Tua" dia tulis ketika ia masih duduk di bangku SMP.

Pendidikan formal Hamsad hanya kelas 2 SMA karena orang tuanya tak sanggup membayar biaya sekolah. Seputus sekolah, ia bekerja sebagai pegawai sipil di kantor militer, sebagai korektor, dan kemudian sebagai pengasuh ruang kebudayaan koran. Sambil bekerja, Hamsad terus menulis. Cerpennya menarik perhatian para pengarang senior di kotanya, Medan. Karena prestasinya itu, Hamsad diajak menghadiri Konferensi Karyawan Pengarang Indonesia di Jakarta pada tahun 1964. Ia hadir sebagai pengarang termuda ketika itu.

Setahun tahun setelah lawatan pertamanya ke Jakarta, ia memutuskan untuk pindah ke Jakarta.

Pada tahun 1969 Hamsad ditawari Arief Budiman untuk bergabung dengan majalah sastra *Horison*. Di majalah itu ia mula-mula bekerja sebagai korektor, kemudian redaktur, hingga akhirnya menjadi pemimpin redaksi sebelum pensiun pada tahun 2002.

Hamsad Rangkuti adalah pengarang dengan bakat alam. Ia tak pernah belajar menulis cerpen. Setelah 20 tahun mengarang, barulah Hamsad memperoleh “pendidikan” karang-mengarang melalui pelatihan penulisan skenario. Pelatihan itu memberinya kesadaran tentang teknik mengarang.

Sebagai pengarang produktif, karya-karya Hamsad banyak muncul di koran, majalah, dan antologi bersama. Beberapa cerpennya diterjemahkan ke bahasa Inggris dan Jerman. Hamsad juga banyak menerima penghargaan atas cerpen-cerpennya, antara lain, Penghargaan Karya Sastra Pusat Bahasa (2001), Penghargaan Sastra Pemerintah Daerah Jakarta (2000), Anugerah Kesetiaan Berkarya dari surat kabar KOMPAS (2000), dan Khatulistiwa Literary Award (2003).

Berikut ini adalah buku-buku yang memuat karya Hamsad Rangkuti.

Antologi Bersama:

Cerita Pendek Indonesia (Satyagraha Hoerip, Ed., 19..)

Cerpen-Cerpen Indonesia Mutakhir (Suratman Markasan, Ed., 1991)

Derabat: Cerpen Pilihan Kompas 1999 (1999)

Dua Tengkorak Kepala: Cerpen Pilihan Kompas 2000 (2000)

Kumpulan Cerpen:

Lukisan Perkawinan (1982)

Cemara (1982)

Sampah Bulan Desember (2000)

Bibir dalam Pispot (2003)

Novel:

Ketika Lampu Berwarna Merah (1988)

Klamono

Klamono

Cerita Anak:

Kereta Pagi Jam Lima

Surat dalam Tabung

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

Hamsad Rangkuti was born at 7th May, 1943 at Titikuning, Medan, North Sumatra. His father was a night guard and his mother was a fruit seller at a market and a freelancer worms-gather at a tobacco farm.

Hamsad Rangkuti loved to dream and fantasize; he then wrote his dream and fantasy into short stories. Hamsad admitted that he inherited his talent from his father. The difference was that his father told stories orally, while Hamsad wrote stories.

When he was young, Hamsad had a high reading interest. Because he could not buy newspapers, he only read newspapers at a *wedana*'s¹ office at his home town. From his reading he was acquainted with works of the world's writers, such as works from Anton Chekov, Ernest Hemingway, Maxim Gorky, and O'Henry. From that reading activity his writing talent grew and well expanded. His first short story, "*Sebuah Nyanyian di Rambung Tua*"², was written when he was in high school.

His stopped his formal education when he was at the second grade in high school because his parents could not support his school fee. After that, he worked as a civil servant at a military office as a corrector then he became a director of the culture column of a newspaper. While working, Hamsad was still writing. His short stories attracted his seniors' attention in his town, Medan. With that achievement, Hamsad was then invited to attend *Konferensi Karyawan Pengarang Indonesia*³ in Jakarta in 1964. He was the youngest writer at that time.

A year after his first travel to Jakarta, he decided to move to Jakarta.

In 1969 Hamsad was offered to join in a literature magazine, *Horizon*, by Arief Budiman. At that magazine, he firstly worked as a corrector, then he became an editor, and he finally became the chief editor before he was retired in 2002.

Hamsad Rangkuti is a talented writer. He had never learned how to write short stories. After 20 years writing, Hamsad got his writing “knowledge” by attending workshop on scenario writing. That workshop gave him knowledge about writing technique.

As a productive writer, his works were published in newspapers, magazines, and anthology. Some of his short stories were translated into English and German. Hamsad had accepted many awards related to his short stories, for example, Literary Award from the National Language Center (2001), Literary Award from the local government of Jakarta (2000), Loyal Writing Award from KOMPAS (2000), and Khatulistiwa Literary Award (2003).

Below are books which contain Hamsad Rangkuti's works.

Anthology:

Cerita Pendek Indonesia (Satyagraha Hoerip, Ed., 19..) (Indonesia Short Stories)

Cerpen-Cerpen Indonesia Mutakhir (Suratman Markasan, Ed., 1991) (The Latest Indonesia Short Stories)

Derabat: Cerpen Pilihan Kompas 1999 (1999) (Derabat: Kompas Selected Short Stories)

Dua Tengkorak Kepala: Cerpen Pilihan Kompas 2000 (2000) (Two Skulls: Kompas Selected Short Stories)

Short Stories Compilation:

Lukisan Perkawinan (1982) (Wedding Painting)

Cemara (1982) (Casuarina Tree)

Sampah Bulan Desember (2000) (Garbage in December)

Bibir dalam Pispot (2003) (Lips in a Chamber Pot)

Novels:

Ketika Lampu Berwarna Merah (1988) (When a Lamp is Red)

Klamono

Children Stories:

Kereta Pagi Jam Lima (Morning Train at Five)

Surat dalam Tabung (A Letter in a Tube)

Notes:

1. *wedana*: regent's helper
2. *Sebuah Nyanyian di Rambung Tua*: A Song at An Old Rubber Tree
Konferensi Karyawan Pengarang Indonesia:
Conference of the Indonesian Writer Employee

Cerita Pendek:

LAGU DI ATAS BUS

Sebuah bus malam jarak jauh meluncur dalam kecepatan sedang-sedang saja. Para penumpang baru saja makan malam di rumah makan tempat persinggahan bus malam itu di pertengahan perjalanannya. Di luar, dalam kegelapan malam, tumbuh menyungkup di sisi kiri dan kanan jalan pepohonan. Lampu kendaraan itu menyorot di sepanjang jalan, tidak ubahnya satu per satu mereka memegang senter, berlari di antara dua deretan pohon. Dari celah kegelapan sesekali muncul percik cahaya menandakan ada kehidupan di luar. Lampu bus itu tidak ubahnya sepotong kapur yang ditorehkan di atas papan tulis.

Garis putih itu setiap saat dilalap kegelapan yang bersembunyi di bawah kolong, sementara itu garis yang baru terus tercipta. Begitu terus-menerus.

Orang-orang di dalam bus itu tidak tertidur. Mereka merasa segar. Sopir menghidupkan *tape recorder*. Para penumpang mendengarkan lagu yang berkumandang sambil berlina-lena. Namun, tiba-tiba terdengar orang berteriak:

"Bolehkah lagu itu ditukar? Saya ingin mendengarkan lagu jazz!" kata penumpang yang berteriak itu.

"Tolong Pak Sopir. Lagunya ditukar saja dengan irama jazz," kata penumpang yang lain memperkuat.

"Tetapi, saya tidak punya kaset jazz!" kata sopir.

"Aku membawa kaset lagu yang aku minta!" kata orang yang meminta lagu jazz, sambil dia mengeluarkan kaset jazz yang dia maksud dari dalam saku bajunya. Kemudian berkumandanglah lagu jazz.

Tetapi, baru saja lagu jazz itu berkumandang, baru beberapa detik saja, terdengar pula orang berteriak:

"Bolehkah lagu itu ditukar?" teriak itu ditujukan kepada orang yang meminta lagu jazz.

"Boleh!" kata orang yang meminta lagu jazz.

"Saya ingin irama disko," kata orang yang meminta supaya lagu jazz itu diganti.

"Tolong Pak Sopir," kata orang yang meminta lagu jazz, "bapak ini tidak suka dengan lagu kesenangan saya. Dia minta ditukar dengan irama disko."

"Tetapi, saya tidak punya kaset berirama disko," kata sopir.

"Saya punya. Saya membawa kaset lagu kesenangan saya" kata orang itu. Dia pun mengeluarkan kaset dari dalam sakunya, sekejap kemudian berkumandanglah lagu berirama disko.

Para penumpang mendengar lagu itu hanya beberapa detik saja, sebab terdengar pula orang berteriak dari bangku yang lain.

"Bolehkah lagu itu ditukar?" isi teriakan itu, yang ditujukan kepada orang yang meminta lagu berirama disko.

"Boleh!" kata orang yang meminta lagu berirama disko.

"Saya ingin lagu keroncong."

"Tolong Pak Sopir. Bapak ini tidak suka dengan lagu disko kesenangan saya. Dia minta lagu keroncong."

"Tetapi, saya tidak punya kaset keroncong," kata sopir.

"Saya punya. Saya membawa kaset kesenangan saya." Orang itu mengambil kaset dari dalam saku bajunya. Kemudian mengumandang lagu irama keroncong.

Para penumpang mendengar lagu itu hanya beberapa saat saja. Seseorang berteriak pula dari bangku yang lain.

"Bolehkah lagu itu ditukar?"

"Boleh!" kata orang yang meminta lagu keroncong.

"Saya ingin lagu dangdut."

"Tolong Pak Sopir. Bapak ini tidak suka dengan lagu keroncong, lagu kesenangan saya. Dia minta lagu dangdut."

"Tetapi, saya tidak punya kaset dangdut," kata sopir.

"Saya punya. Saya membawa kaset kesenangan saya."

Orang itu mengambil kaset dari dalam saku bajunya. Ia menyerahkannya kepada sopir, dan berku-mandanglah lagu dangdut.

Para penumpang mendengar lagu itu. Tetapi, beberapa saat kemudian, terdengar pula orang berteriak:

"Bolehkah lagu itu ditukar?"

"Boleh!"

"Saya ingin lagu pop Indonesia."

"Tolong Pak Sopir. Bapak ini tidak suka lagu dangdut kesenangan saya. Dia minta ditukar lagu pop Indonesia."

"Tetapi, saya tidak punya kaset pop Indonesia," kata sopir.

"Saya punya. Saya selalu membawa kaset lagu kesenangan saya."

Orang itu mengambil kaset dari dalam saku bajunya. Kemudian mengamandang lagu pop Indonesia. Tetapi, baru saja lagu itu mengumandang, terdengar pula orang berteriak:

"Bolehkah lagu itu ditukar?"

"Boleh!" kata orang yang meminta lagu pop Indonesia.

"Saya ingin lagu gending Jawa."

"Tolong Pak Sopir. Bapak ini tidak suka lagu pop Indonesia, padahal lagu itu kesukaan saya. Dia minta ditukar dengan gending Jawa."

"Tetapi, saya tidak punya kaset gending Jawa," kata sopir.

"Saya punya. Saya tidak pernah meninggalkan kaset gending Jawa, kesenangan saya, setiap saya berpergian. Ini kaset lagu kesukaan saya. Gending Jawa!" katanya sambil menyerahkan kaset itu kepada sopir.

Para penumpang mendengarkan lagu itu. Tetapi, beberapa saat saja kemudian, terdengar orang berteriak:

"Bolehkah lagu itu ditukar?"

"Boleh!" kata orang yang meminta lagu gending Jawa.

"Saya ingin lagu kecapi Sunda!"

"Tolong Pak Sopir. Bapak ini tidak suka gending Jawa, padahal saya paling suka gending Jawa. Dia minta kecapi Sunda!"

"Tetapi, saya tidak punya kaset kecapi Sunda," kata sopir.

"Saya punya. Saya tidak pernah meninggalkan kaset kecapi Sunda, kesukaan saya. Ini kaset kesenangan saya. Saya selalu membawanya ke mana pun saya pergi!"

Orang itu mengeluarkan kaset dari saku bajunya. Dan, berkumandanglah lagu kecapi Sunda.

Para penumpang mendengar lagu itu. Tetapi, orang berteriak pula sebelum kaset kecapi Sunda berkumandang tiga puluh detik.

"Bolehlah lagu itu ditukar?"

"Boleh!" kata orang yang meminta lagu kecapi Sunda.

"Saya ingin irama Minang, *saluang*."

"Tetapi, saya tidak punya kaset irama Minang, *saluang*," kata sopir.

"Den punya! *Aden* selalu membawa lagu *kamouang den, saluang*."

Orang itu menyerahkan kaset dari dalam saku bajunya. Dan, berkumandanglah lagu irama Minang,

saluang. Dan, seperti tadi, orang pun berteriak pula beberapa saat kemudian.

"Bolehkah lagu itu ditukar?"

"Boleh!" kata orang yang meminta lagu *saluang*

"Saya ingin lagu Tapanuli modern."

"Tolong Pak Sopir. Bapak ini tidak suka lagu *saluang*, lagu kesenangan saya. Dia minta lagu itu ditukar dengan lagu Batak!"

"Batak katamu? Kamu menyinggung, ya?!" orang itu memegang leher baju orang yang meminta lagu *saluang*.

"Oh, tidak. Maksud *den*, Tapanuli modern."

"Untung kita sama-sama dari Suamtera. Kalau tidak, Saudara telah saya pukul."

"Saya juga berpikir begitu, kita sama-sama dari Sumatera. Kalau tidak, Saudara telah saya pukul. Siapa yang bisa menahan kesabaran kalau leher baju kita direntap orang. Maaf! Tolong Pak Sopir. Bapak ini mita lagu Tapanuli modern."

"Tetapi, saya tidak punya lagu Tapanuli modern."

"Aku punya! Aku selalu membawa lagu kesenanganku. Aku suka lagu daerahku sendiri. Putar Pak Sopir!"

Orang itu menyerahkan kaset dari dalam saku bajunya. Kemudian, mengumandang lagu Tapanuli modern. Tetapi, orang berteriak pula meminta lagu itu diganti.

"Bolehkah lagu itu ditukar?"

"Boleh saja! Mengapa? Kamu tidak suka lagu Tapanuli modern?"

"Saya minta lagu mars perjuangan!" kata orang berseragam hijau. Dia membawa pistol.

"Tolong Pak Sopir. Bapak ini tidak suka lagu Tapanuli modern, padahal lagu itu lagu kesenangan saya. Bapak ini minta diputarkan lagu mars perjuangan."

"Tetapi, saya tidak punya lagu mars perjuangan," kata sopir.

"Saya punya! Saya selalu membawa ke mana pun saya pergi lagu-lagu kesenangan saya. Mars perjuangan. Ayo putar! Sampai selesai! Tidak boleh diputus sebelum selesai! Aku membawa pistol."

Tetapi, baru saja lagu mars perjuangan itu mengumandang, terdengar pula orang berteriak meminta lagu itu ditukar.

"Bolehkah lagu itu ditukar?" kata orang yang berseragam hijau pula. Dia membawa dua pistol.

Orang yang meminta lagu mars perjuangan melihat kepadanya. Dia melihat dua pistol di pinggang orang itu. Akhirnya dia berkata:

"Boleh! Mengapa tidak? Boleh! Lagu itu boleh ditukar."

"Saya ingin diputar lagu *Indonesia Raya*!" katanya membentak.

"Tolong Pak Sopir. Bapak ini tidak suka lagu mars perjuangan. Padahal, lagu itu membangkitkan semangat perjuangan pada diri saya. Bapak ini minta diputar lagu *Indonesia Raya*."

"Tetapi, saya tidak punya kaset lagu *Indonesia Raya*."

"Kaset lagu apa saja yang kau punya?" kata orang yang bersegarum hijau lengkap dengan dua pistol di pinggangnya.

Sopir itu gugup. Dia membuka laci tempat penyimpanan kaset. Tetapi, dia tidak menemukan yang dia cari.

"Kau harus punya kaset lagu *Indonesia Raya*. Carilah! Dan, mesti kau dapatkan!"

Sopir terus membongkar tempat penyimpanan kaset. Dia tiba-tiba tersentak. Dia seperti mengingat sesuatu.

“Saya pernah punya kaset lagu *Indonesia Raya* itu! Tetapi, di mana kaset *Indonesia Raya* itu sekarang? Oh, biarkan aku mengingat-ingatnya sejanak. Ya, sekarang aku baru ingat. Tujuh belas Agustus yang lalu, pernah serombongan Veteran Perang Kemerdekaan menyarter bus ini. Mereka merayakan Hari Kemerdekaan itu di atas bus ini. Mereka menyusuri rute perjuangan mereka. Rute Jenderal Sudirman. Mereka memutar lagu-lagu mars perjuangan. Dan, memutar lagu *Indonesia Raya*. Suatu saat, di tengah perjalanan menyusuri ruter Jenderal Sudirman itu, mereka meminta aku menghentikan kendaraan. Mereka kulihat mengheningkan cipta. Aku terharu melihat mereka. Mereka menitikkan air mata. Kurasa mereka mengenang rekan-rekan mereka yang gugur dalam pertempuran melawan penjajah. Mereka meminta aku memutar ulang lagu *Indonesia Raya* itu. Di mana, ya, sekarang kaset lagu *Indonesia Raya* itu. Aku ingat betul, mereka tidak meminta kaset lagu *Indonesia Raya* itu waktu mereka kuantar kembali ke Gedung Veteran Empat Lima sepulang dari menyusuri rute Jenderal Sudirman itu. Kuingat apa pesan mereka saat menyerahkan kaset lagu *Indonesia Raya* itu. ‘Sekali-sekali, di tengah perjalananmu, setiap tanggal tujuh belas Agustus, tolong kau putar lagu *Indonesia Raya* ini untuk didengar para penumpangmu.’ Ya, sekarang aku ingat. Mereka berkata begitu sambil menyerahkan kaset lagu *Indonesia Raya* itu. Tetapi, di mana kaset lagu *Indonesia Raya* itu sekarang? O iya... Mungkin mereka. Kenek-kenekku selalu bertukar-tukar. Mereka suka memutar lagu-lagu kegemaran mereka. Apa mungkin mereka...? Mungkin! Itu mungkin! Mereka umumnya datang dari daerah. Ya! Itu mungkin!”

Sopir itu menghentikan mobil itu. Di luar tampak lampu mobil itu diam di atas aspal. Kapur tulis itu terhenti menconteng papan hitam di depan kelas. Sopir itu beranjak dari balik lingkaran kemudi. Orang-orang

memperhatikannya. Dua orang yang mengenakan *uniform* hijau terpaku memperhatikannya. Sopir itu mengais-ngais tong sampah. Mengangkat keranjang sampah itu dan menuangkannya di atas lantai. Dikais-kaisnya sesaat. Mereka akhirnya melihat sopir itu mengangkat sepotong kutang, celana dalam, pembalut wanita, serenteng bekas teh celup, sobekan kain, kertas bernoda, daun pisang bekas pembungkus dan sebuah kaset.

"Aku menemukannya! Apa kataku! Mereka membuangnyalah!" teriak sopir itu.

"Putar! Putar segera!" kata orang berseragam hijau lengkap dengan dua pistol di pinggangnya.

Sopir itu kembali duduk di belakang kemudi. Dia memasukkan kaset itu ke dalam *tape recorder*. Lagu *Indonesia Raya* itu terdengar mengumandang, dan bus malam itu kembali bergerak. Tetapi, baru beberapa detik saja lagu *Indonesia Raya* itu mengumandang, terdengar pula orang berteriak:

"Bolehkah lagu itu ditukar?" kata teriakan itu. Orang itu berseragam hijau. Dia membawa tiga pistol. Satu teracung di tangan kanannya, dua tergantung di pinggang sebelah kiri dan kanan.

Orang yang meminta lagu *Indonesia Raya* itu memandang orang dengan tiga pistol. Sejenak kemudian dia memandang orang yang membawa satu pistol. Dia kemudian beralih memandang orang dengan tiga pistol. Lalu dengan tegas dia berkata:

"Tidak! Lagu *Indonesia Raya* itu tidak boleh ditukar. Kita harus mendengarnya sampai selesai!"

"Tetapi, telingaku sakit mendengarnya!" kata orang yang berseragam hijau dengan tiga pistol di pinggangnya.

"Apa katamu? Sakit telingamu mendengarnya? Itu artinya kau tidak cinta pada Tanah Airmu!"

"Tetapi, tidak saatnya lagu kebangsaan itu diputar sekarang!"

"Sekarang adalah saat yang tepat! Tidak kau lihat mereka sudah mulai berkelahi. Masing-masing telah meminta lagu daerah mereka sendiri-sendiri."

"Tetapi, telingaku sakit mendengar lagu *Indonesia Raya* itu."

"Berarti kau dari jenis para pengkhianat! Sebaiknya kau keluar dari dalam bus ini!"

"Tetapi...," kata orang berseragam hijau dengan tiga pucuk pistol.

"Tetapi, kau sudah membayar ongkos? Itu yang mau kau katakan," kata orang yang berseragam hijau dengan dua pistol di pinggangnya.

"Ya! Aku sudah membayar ongkos!"

"Saya akan ganti uang sisa ongkos perjalananmu. Lagu *Indonesia Raya* ini harus mengumandang sampai tujuan akhir. Kalau kau tidak suka, kau boleh keluar dari dalam bus ini! Tak ada tempat bagi yang tidak suka lagu kebangsaannya sendiri. Siapa yang tidak suka dengan lagu kebangsaannya sendiri?"

"Saya suka!" kata orang yang berseragam hijau dengan sebuah pistol di pinggangnya. Dia bergeser ke dekat orang yang membawa dua pistol. Mereka berdua memiliki tiga pistol.

Orang yang memakai seragam hijau dengan dua pistol di pinggangnya berdiri di atas tempat duduk. Dia diikuti orang yang berseragam dengan satu pucuk pistol di pinggangnya.

"Cepat katakan! Siapa yang tidak suka dengan lagu kebangsaannya sendiri?!"

"Kami suka!" teriak para penumpang berge-muruh.

"Tidak ada tempat untuk orang yang tidak suka dengan lagu kebangsaannya sendiri, di sini!"

"Saya suka!" kata sopir.

Kapur putih di atas papan hitam terus men-
conteng di sepanjang jalan beraspal. Kegelapan di
bawah lantai terus juga melahapnya. Begitu terus-
menerus. **

PISPOT

Kami naik ke mobil polisi itu. Aku duduk di sebelah wanita korban penjambretan. Lelaki yang tersangka melakukan penjambretan itu duduk di depan kami. Hidungnya masih meneteskan darah. Di kiri kananya duduk petugas pasar yang menangkapnya dan seorang polisi. Mobil itu terbuka. Angin menerbangkan rambut kami.

Orang itu beberapa saat yang lalu melintas di antara keramaian pasar. Seorang wanita menjerit. Aku melihat orang itu memasukkan sesuatu ke mulutnya di saat langkahnya yang tergesa. Aku menuding lelaki itu dan petugas pasar menangkapnya. Massa pun melampiaskan amarah mereka.

Orang itu melap darah pada bibirnya dalam kecepatan lari mobil. Dia tidak berani mengangkat wajah untuk memperlihatkan darah yang masih meleleh menconteng mukanya.

Sebenarnya tidak ada barang untuk menuduhnya sebagai pelaku penjambretan. Namun, aku mempertahankan kesaksianku dan ia pun terjerumus ke tangan polisi.

Di kantor polisi dia mulai didesak untuk mengakui perbuatannya. Mereka mulai menjalankan cara untuk membuat orang mengaku kesalahannya.

"Benar kamu telan kalung itu?" bentak mereka.

"Tidak," kata laki-laki itu menyembunyikan mukanya.

"Kamu buang?"

"Tidak."

"Kamu sembunyikan?"

"Tidak."

"Kamu beri kepada temanmu?"

"Tidak."

"Dia tidak bisa berkata lain selain: Tidak!" Mereka mulai tidak sabar. "Siksa!"

Orang itu terlempar dari kursi. Dia mencoba hendak berdiri. Bertelekan pada sudut meja. Dia kembali duduk di kursi.

"Saya tidak melakukan penjambretan itu, Bapak Polisi."

"Bukan itu yang kutanyakan! Ke mana kau sembunyikan kalung itu?!"

"Dia telan!" kata tak sabar.

"Kamu lihat?"

"Saya lihat! Dia masukkan kalung itu dan dia telan!" Aku menambah kata "kalung" pada kesaksianku. Padahal, aku tidak melihat benda apa yang dimasukkan ke dalam mulut. Sekarang sudah terlanjur!

"Pasti?"

"Pasti!"

"Dia masukkan kalung itu ke dalam mulut? Begitu?" Polisi di seberang meja memindahkan kesaksianku ke atas kertas yang diketiknya.

"Ya! Dia masukkan!" kataku.

"Lalu dia telan?"

"Dia telan!"

"Berapa gram?" tanyanya ke wanita korban penjambretan.

"Lima belas gram!" jawab wanita itu.

"Cukup! Itu sudah cukup!" Bentak kepala pemeriksa. "Semua keterangan itu sudah cukup menyakinkan! Sekarang kita paksa dia mengeluarkan kalung itu! Ambil obat pencahar! Pisang dan pepaya. Suruh dia makan sebanyak-banyaknya. Usahakan supaya dia mencret seperti burung. Lalu tampung kotorannya!"

Kepala pemeriksa itu pergi meninggalkan ruang pemeriksaan. Setelah semua benda yang disebutkan tersedia di ruang pemeriksaan, orang memanggilnya dan dia datang dengan keputusannya.

"Suruh dia minum obat pencahar! Paksa! Apa itu? Garam inggris?"

"Betul Pak," kata bawahannya.

"Bagus, dan tampung kotorannya!"

Mereka pun mulai memaksa lelaki itu menelan obat pencahar. Tetapi, lelaki itu tidak mau meminumnya. Dia tidak mau membuka mulut. Mereka mulai keras. Gelas berisi larutan garam inggris itu mereka sodokkan ke mulutnya. Dia tutup mulutnya seperti orang menggigit. Kemudian tendangannya itu membuat dia terlempar lagi dari kursi.

"Minum! Apa kau tidak biasa minum?!"

Dia bertelekan pada sudut meja untuk bisa bangkit dari tempat dia tersungkur.

"Kupas pepaya itu! Dan, suruh dia makan!"

"Mana yang lebih dahulu Komandan? Obat pencahar atau pepaya?"

"Serentak juga tidak apa-apa! Yang penting tampung kotorannya begitu dia ke jamban!"

"Nanti ususnya...."

"Tidak ada urusan! Suruh dia telah obat pencahar itu! Kemudian pisang atau pepaya, lalu tampung!"

Mereka pun memaksa lelaki itu membuka mulut untuk menelan semua itu.

Aku mulai tidak kuat melihat penyiksaan itu. Aku minta kepada komandan pemeriksa membolehkan aku membujuk lelaki itu menelan obat pencahar; pisang dan pepaya. Dia menyetujui. Lalu aku dan lelaki itu dimasukkan ke dalam ruang berdinding kaca yang terang benderang. Para pemeriksa berada di balik *riben* dan kami tidak melihatnya. Termasuk wanita yang

menjadi korban penjambretan itu mengawasi kami di balik kaca.

Aku mulai membujuk laki-laki itu. Gelap di luar memberi kesan seolah kami berada di dalam kamar dalam gelap malam.

"Sekarang Cuma kita berdua di ruang ini. Ada suatu yang ingin kukatakan kepadamu." Aku mulai meyakinkannya. "Kalau dalam waktu dekat kau tidak mengeluarkan kalung itu, mereka akan mengoperasimu!" Aku bergeser dekat kepadanya. "Kau tentu tahu bagaimana orang dioperasi? Kau akan dibawa ke kamar bedah. Sebelum kau dioperasi, tubuhmu akan ditembus sinar X untuk melihat di bagian mana kalung itu nyangkut di ususmu. Kau akan puasa dalam waktu yang lama. Setelah itu baru kau dimasukkan ke kamar bedah. Kau akan dibius. Pada saat kau sudah tidak sadar oleh obat bius, pada saat itulah kulit perutmu akan disayat mereka di meja operasi. Pisau bedah itu akan masuk ke dalam perutmu seperti orang menyangi ikan. Ususmu akan disabet mereka dengan garam, karena kau menyembunyikan benda berharga di ususmu. Satu hal harus kau ketahui bahwa operasi itu bukan untuk menyelamatkan nyawamu, tetapi untuk menyelamatkan kalung yang kau telan. Coba bayangkan seandainya operasi itu memerlukan tambahan darah. Siapa yang akan mau menyumbangkan darahnya untuk orang seperti kau? Jambret! Ingat bung. Kau tidak ada artinya bagi mereka. Mereka mengoperasimu dalam saat mereka geram karena kau menyembunyikan kalung emas di dalam ususmu. Kau tidak ada artinya bagi mereka. Tidak mungkin ada orang mau menyumbang darah secara sukarela kepadamu. Tidak mungkin ada salah seorang sanak keluargamu yang mau datang menunjukkan diri untuk menyumbang darah kepadamu. Mereka takut dan malu untuk muncul. Karena kau maling! Tahu kau? Nyawamu bagi mereka tidak ada artinya. Tubuhmu yang

terbaring dalam pengaruh obat bius itu tidak akan mereka hiraukan lagi begitu mereka menemukan kalung emas itu. Saking gembiranya mereka, aku yakin begitu, mereka akan lupa menyudahi operasimu. Kau akan mati sia-sia. Untuk apa menyelamatkan penjambret seperti kau. Mengurangi jumlah penjahat lebih bijaksana! Maka, kau akan mampus! Kau tidak ubah seperti koper tua yang akan dicampakkan setelah dikeluarkan isinya. Mayatmu akan terbaring tanpa ada orang yang menjenguk.”

Orang itu dari tunduk lalu memandang kepadaku.

”Kau masih muda Bung. Masih banyak kemungkinan masa depanmu. Kau harus memanfaatkan hidup ini. Masak kau mau mampus dengan jalan konyol seperti itu? Operasi itu bukan untuk menyelamatkan jiwamu, tetapi untuk menyelamatkan kalung emas yang kau telan!”

”Apa yang harus aku lakukan?” katanya.

”Keluarkan!” bentakku.

”Aku tidak melakukannya!”

”Sudah tidak ada lagi waktu untuk berkilah-kilah!

Tidak saatnya menyembunyikan kejahatan pada saat ini. Jangan tunggu mereka kalap. Jangan kau kira mereka tidak melihat kita. Semua gerak-gerik kita mereka lihat lewat kaca *riben* ini. Lihat kedip apa rokok mereka di dalam gelap itu! Itu sama seperti mata mengintai kita. Ayo lakukan! Cepat telah obat pencakar itu! Apa yang kau takutkan pergi ke jamban?”

Dia raih gelas berisi larutan garam Inggris dari atas meja. Dia reguk seperti orang minum kopi. Kemudian dia lahap pepaya dan pisang.

”Makan lebih banyak pepaya itu, biar cepat dia mendorongnya.”

Seorang petugas membuka pintu kaca. Mereka telah lihat apa yang terjadi di dalam.

”Sudah ingin ke jamban?” katanya.

"Dia baru menelannya. Belum. Sebentar lagi, Pak."

"Bagus! Kalau dia tidak suka pepaya dalam negeri, kita bisa sediakan pepaya Bangkok!" Dia tutup pintu kaca itu.

Tidak lama kemudian dia muncul pula. Dua orang masuk membawa papan penyekat dan dua pispot. Papan penyekat itu dimasukkan sebagai dinding jamban. Orang itu kalau sudah ingin ke jamban, dia boleh pergi ke balik papan penyekat untuk membuang hajat. Untuk alasan tertentu, orang itu diperintahkan menanggalkan pakaiannya, kecuali celana dalam. Dia disuruh mereka pergi ke balik papan penyekat sampai dia memerlukan pispot.

Aku dan para petugas keluar dari dalam ruangan berkaca. Kami menonton di balik *riben*, menunggu orang itu mengeluarkan kotorannya ke dalam pispot.

Seorang petugas yang memegang alat pengeras suara masuk ke dalam ruangan berkaca dan mengambil pispot yang diulurkan dari papan penyekat. Petugas itu tampak memeriksa isi pispot dengan ranting. Terdengar dia melaporkan apa yang dia lihat di dalam pispot.

"Belum keluar! Baru biji-biji kedele. Rupanya dia makan tempe!"

Dia keluar membawa pispot dan seseorang menyambutnya dan membersihkannya di lubang kakus.

Si penjambret meminta pispot baru. Kemudian orang yang membawa alat pengeras suara masuk kembali ke dalam ruangan berkaca dan menyambut pispot yang diulurkan dari balik papan penyekat. Lalu terdengar suara dari dalam pengeras suara:

"Belum juga! Masih sisa-sisa tempe. Ada seperti benang. Kukira ini sumbu singkong rebus!"

Dia kemudian dalam urutan waktu melakukan hal yang sama. Sementara, di balik *riben* kami terus menunggu sudah sampai sepuluh kotoran di dalam pispot

dituang ke dalam kakus, namun kalung itu tak terkait di ujung ranting. Wanita pemilik kalung mulai bosan menunggu. Dia me-*nilpon* suaminya. Tidak lama kemudian suami wanita itu datang. Dia pun ikut bergabung menonton di balik *riben*. Orang di balik papan penyekat makin pendek jarak waktunya mengeluarkan pispot, namun kalung emas lima belas gram itu tidak keluar bersama kotorannya. Pada saat kami menunggu seperti itu, tiba-tiba papan penyekat di dalam ruangan kaca itu terdorong dan kemudian tumbang. Orang di baliknya jatuh terjerambab menindihnya. Dia sudah tidak dapat berdiri. Dia menjadi lunglai setelah terus-menerus mengeluarkan kotorannya.

Maka, si suami pun mengambil keputusan. Dia desak si istri mencabut tuduhannya. Si istri melakukannya. Tuduhannya dia cabut. Dia minta maaf kepada polisi. Karena mungkin bukan orang itu yang menjambret kalungnya.

Lelaki itu dibersihkan di kamar mandi. Tuduhan terhadap dirinya dicabut! Wanita itu minta maaf kepadanya. Aku juga minta maaf kepadanya. Polisi juga memaafkannya. Dia bebas!

Karena merasa berdosa, aku menolong lelaki itu meninggalkan kantor polisi. Aku memampahnya naik ke atas taksi. Aku terus-menerus meminta maaf di sepanjang perjalanan. Aku raba uang di sakuku. Aku beri dia uang untuk menebus rasa berdosa pada diriku. Lelaki itu berlinang air mata penerimanya.

"Beli makanan. Kau perlu gizi untuk memulihkan kesehatanmu. Aku benar-benar merasa berdosa!"

Dia lipat uang di tangannya.

"Terima kasih. Ternyata Bapak orang baik."

"Jangan katakan begitu! Aku telah menjerumuskanmu. Uang itu tidak seberapa artinya. Aku telah melakukan kesaksian palsu. Maafkan aku, Bung."

Kemudian kami sama diam di dalam perjalanan itu. Tak lama dia minta diturunkan di gang tempat tinggalnya. Aku menolongnya sampai ke luar. Aku menyalamnya.

"Maafkan aku Bung. Rasanya aku berdosa betul. Sepuluh ribu tidak ada artinya untuk mengenyahkan rasa berdosa itu. Bisa kau berdiri? Apa tidak ada becak ke rumahmu? Apa perlu aku mengantarmu?"

"Tidak usah Pak. Terima kasih."

Dia tampak tidak kuasa menahan air matanya. Aku biarkan dia berdiri goyah. Aku masuk ke dalam taksi. Pintu taksi dia tutupkan sambil dia gunakan tempat bertumpu. Aku ulurkan tanganku lewat jendela untuk menjabat tangannya. Aku belum merasa cukup untuk melenyapkan rasa bersalah itu. Maka, aku mengulang apa yang telah kukatakan.

"Maafkan saya, ya Bung. Beli makanan untuk memulihkan kesehatanmu. Aku benar-benar merasa berdosa kepadamu. Aku tidak akan mengulang hal yang sama terhadap orang lain."

Orang itu menghapus air matanya pada pipinya yang berdarah. Mukanya yang lebam dia tundukan.

"Bapak adalah saksi yang benar. Bapak tidak boleh begitu merasa berdosa." Dia semakin menunduk seolah dia hendak menyembunyikan mukanya. "Bapak orang baik. Saya harus mengatakannya! Anakku sedang sakit keras. Kami perlu biaya. Istriku telah putus asa di rumah. Dokter meminta banyak." Dia tiba-tiba mengangkat mukanya. "Bapak adalah saksi itu! Bapak orang baik. Saya harus mengatakannya! Saya tidak boleh membiarkan Bapak terus-menerus merasa berdosa." Dia kembali menunduk. "Saya bukanlah penjambret. Tetapi, saya telah melakukannya. Tiga kali kalung itu keluar dalam pispot. Tiga kali pula aku menelannya." Dia lepas jabat tangannya pelan-pelan. Dia memandang padaku.

"Bapak orang baik. Hukumlah saya." Dia raba uang yang telah saya beri itu yang tersimpan di dalam saku bajunya. Dia mungkin hendak mengembalikannya.

"Kalau begitu kau masih memerlukan pispot," kataku.

Aku biarkan dia memegang uang sepuluh ribu itu. Aku suruh taksi meninggalkannya. Aku harus segera memutuskan begitu sebelum aku berubah keputusan. Kurasa itu lebih tepat. ***

MAUKAH KAU MENGHAPUS BEKAS BIBIRNYA DI BIBIRKU DENGAN BIBIRMU?

Seorang wanita muda dalam sikap yang mencurigakan berdiri di pinggir geladak sambil memegang terali kapal. Dia tampak sedang bersiap-siap hendak melakukan upacara bunuh diri, melompat dari lantai kapal itu. Baru saja ada di antara anak buah kapal berusaha mendekatnya, mencoba mencegah perbuatan nekat itu, tetapi wanita muda itu mengancam akan segera terjun kalau sampai anak buah kapal itu mendekat. Dengan dalih agar bisa memotretnya dalam posisi sempurna, kudekati dia sambil membawa kamera. Aku berhasil memperpendek jarak dengannya, sehingga tegur sapa di antara kami bisa terdengar.

"Tolong ceritakan sebab apa kau ingin bunuh diri?" kataku memancing perhatiannya.

Dia tak beralih dari menatap ke jauh laut. Di sana ada sebuah pulau. Mungkin impiannya yang telah retak menjadi pecah dan sudah tak bisa lagi untuk direkat.

"Tolong ceritakan penyebab segalanya. Biar ada bahan untuk kutulis."

Wanita itu membiarkan sekelilingnya. Angin mempermainkan ujung rambutnya. Mempermainkan ujung lengan bajunya. Dan tampak kalau dia telah berketetapan hati untuk mengambil sebuah keputusan yang nekat. Tiba-tiba dia melepas sepatutnya, menjulurkannya ke laut.

"Ini dari dia," katanya dan melepas sepatu itu. Sepatu itu jatuh mendekati ombak, kuabadikan dalam kamera.

Kemudian dia meraba jari tangan kirinya. Di sana ada sebetuk cincin. Sinar matahari memantul mengantar kilanya. Mata berliannya membiaskan sinar tajam. Dikeluarkan cincin itu dari jari manisnya. Diulurkannya melampui terali. Ombak yang liar menampar dinding kapal. Tangan yang menjulurkan cincin itu sangat mencemaskan.

"Ini dari dia," katanya, dan melepas cincin itu.

"Semua yang ada padaku, yang berasal darinya, akan kubuang ke laut. Sengaja hari ini kupakai semua yang pernah dia berikan kepadaku untuk kubuang satu persatu ke laut. Tak satu pun benda-benda itu yang kuizinkan melekat di tubuhku saat aku telah menjadi mayat di dasar laut. Biarkan aku tanpa bekas sedikit pun darinya. Inilah saat yang tepat membuang segalanya ke laut, dari atas kapal yang pernah membuat sejarah pertemuan kami."

Wanita muda itu mulai melepas kancing-kancing bajunya, melepaskan pakaiannya, dan membuangnya satu per satu ke laut. Upacara pelepasan benda yang melekat di tubuhnya dia akhiri dengan melepas bagian akhir tubuhnya. Membuangnya ke laut.

"Apa pun yang berasal darinya, tidak boleh ada melekat pada jasadku, saat aku sudah menjadi mayat, di dasar laut. Biarkan laut membungkus jasadku seperti kain pembungkus mayat. Biarkan asin airnya menggarani tubuhku tanpa sehelai benang penyekat."

Wanita yang telanjang itu mengangkat sebelah kakinya melampaui terali, bersiap-siap membuang dirinya ke laut. Kamera kubidikkan ke arahnya. Di dalam lensa terhampar pemandangan yang fantastis! Wanita muda, dalam ketelanjangannya, berdiri di tepi geladak dengan latar ombak dan burung camar. Sebuah pulau

berbentuk bercak hitam di kejauhan samudera terlukis di sampingnya dalam bingkai lensa. Sebelum melompat, dia menoleh ke arahku. Seperti ada sesuatu yang tersersit di benaknya yang hendak dia sampaikan kepadaku, sebelum dia melompat mengakhiri ombak.

"Ternyata tidak segampang itu membuang segalanya," katanya. "Ada sesuatu yang tak bisa dibuang begitu saja." Dia diam sejenak, memandang bercak hitam di kejauhan samudera. Dipandanginya lengkung langit agak lama, lalu bergumam: "Bekas bibirnya. Bekas bibirnya tak bisa kubuang begitu saja." Dia berpaling ke arahku. Tatapannya lembut menyejukan. Lama, dan agak lama mata itu memandang dalam tatapan yang mengambang. "Maukah kau menghapus bekas bibirnya di bibirku dengan bibirmu?" katanya dalam nada ragu.

Aku tersentak mendengar permintaan itu. Sangat mengejutkan, dan rasanya tak masuk akal diucapkan olehnya. Permintaan itu terasa datang dari orang yang sedang putus asa. Kucermati wajahnya dalam lensa kamera yang mendekat. Pemulas bibir berwarna merah tembaga dengan sentuhan warna emas, memoles bibirnya, menyiratkan gaya aksi untuk kecantikan seulas bibir.

"Tidak akan aku biarkan bekas itu terbawa ke dasar laut. Maukah kau menghapus bekas bibirnya di bibirku dengan bibirmu?" Tolonglah. Tolonglah aku melenyapkan segalanya.

Orang-orang yang terpaku di pintu lantai geladak berteriak kepadaku.

"Lakukan! Lakukan!"

Seorang muncul di pintu geladak membawa selimut terurai, siap menutup tubuh wanita yang telanjang itu.

"Tolonglah. Tolonglah aku menghapus segalanya. Jangan biarkan bekas itu tetap melakat dibibirku dalam kemaatianku di dasar laut. Tolonglah."

"Lakukanlah! Lakukanlah!" teriak orang-orang yang menyaksikan dari pintu lantai geladak.

Aku hampiri wanita itu. Orang yang membawa selimut itu berlari ke arah kami, menyelimuti kami dengan kain yang terurai itu. Di dalam selimut kukari telinga wanita itu.

"Masih adakah bekas darinya di bagian lain tubuhmu yang harus kuhapus dengan bibirku?" bisikku.

"Saya Chechen, Pak," kata wanita itu memperkenalkan dirinya begitu aku selesai menyampaikan cerpen lisan itu dan berada kembali di antara penonton. "Saya menggemari cerpen-cerpen Bapak. Saya mahasiswa fakultas sastra semester tujuh. Saya senang sekali bisa bertemu dengan Bapak, pengarang dari cerpen-cerpen yang telah banyak saya baca,"

"Terima kasih. Namamu Chechen? Tidak nama seorang Minang."

"Bagaimana kelanjutan cerpen lisan itu?"

"Kau yang harus menlanjutkannya. Kalian. Para pendengarnya."

Sejak itu kami akrab. Aku seperti muda kembali. Berdua ke mana-mana di dalam kampus Kayutanam maupun ke Danau Singkarak, Desa Belimbing, Batusangkar, Bukittinggi, Lembah Harau, Tabek Patah, Kota Gadang, danau Maninjau, Ngalau Indah, Lubang Jepang, Ngarai Sianok, Lembah Anai, dan Istana Pagaruyung.

Besok adalah hari terakhir aku di Kayutanam. Aku harus kembali ke kehidupan rutin di Jakarta. Perpisahan itu kami habiskan di kawasan wisata di luar kota Padangpanjang. Sebuah kawasan semacam taman, berisi rumah gadang dari berbagai daerah di Minangkabau. Kawasan itu bersebelahan dengan lokasi Pusat Dokumentasi dan Informasi Kebudayaan Minangkabau. Tempat itu sejuk diliputi kabut, terkenal sebagai kota hujan. Sebentar-sebentar kabut tebal

melintas menutup kawasan itu. Kami mencari tempat kosong di salah satu bangunan berbentuk payung dengan meja bulat dan kursi sandar melingkar, yang disediakan untuk para pengunjung duduk-duduk memandangi sungai kecil berbatu yang terhampar di bawah dan memandangi puncak Gunung Merapi. Kami berkeliling mencari tempat kosong, tetapi semua bangunan-bangunan kecil itu telah dihuni pasangan-pasangan remaja. Mereka duduk memandangi lembah dan lereng gunung yang terus-menerus diselubungi kabut yang datang seperti asap hutan terbakar. Kami akhirnya duduk di hamparan rumput berbukit, di antara rumah gadang pajangan dalam ukuran yang sebenarnya.

"Selama lima hari, siang dan malam kita tak pernah berpisah. Malam kita duduk berdekatan di warung-warung membiarkan kopi dingin sambil kita berpandangan. Aku mendengar proses kreatifmu sedang kau mendengarkan riwayat dan asal-usul tempat-tempat yang akan kita kunjungi besok pagi. Kita tidak menghiraukan mata-mata yang memandangi kita. Kita biarkan percakapan-percakapan mereka tentang kita. Tanganku kau pegang dan aku merebahkan kepala ke bahu dalam udara dingin Kayutanam. Semua itu akan menjadi kenangan. Besok kau akan pulang dan aku akan kembali ke kampus.

"Kita pergi ke Lubang Jepang. Masuk ke dalam kegelapan gua. Berdua kita di dalam tanpa seorang pengunjung pun mengawasi kita. Aku berbisik, seolah kita masuk ke dalam kamar pengantin dan kau meminta lampu dipadamkan. Kita duduk di puncak pendakian di Lembah Harau. Kita duduk berdua memandangi ke bawah mengikuti arah air terjun. Lembah kita lihat dari ketinggian dan tempat itu sangat sunyi. Kita biarkan kera-kera mendekat dan kita tidak merasa terganggu. Kita biarkan pedagang kelapa muda itu meletakkan sebutir kelapa dengan dua penyedot di lubang tempu-

runnya. Kita tidak hiraukan dia turun meninggalkan kita dan membiarkan kita berdua menikmati kelapa muda yang kau pesan. Kita benar-benar berdua di tempat sunyi itu. Kita menyedot air kelapa muda itu dengan dua alat sedotan dari lubang tempurung yang sama. Aku satu dan kau satu. Terkadang kening kita bersentuhan pada saat menyedot air kelapa muda itu. Kita pun lupa, mana milikku dan mana milikmu pada saat kita mengulang menyedot air kelapa muda itu. Kita sudah tidak menghiraukannya. Sesekali kedua pengisap air kelapa itu kita gunakan keduanya sekaligus, bergantian, sambil kau menatap tepat ke mataku dan aku menatap tepat ke matamu. Aku yakin, hal itu kita lakukan semacam isyarat yang tak berani kita ucapkan.

"Kelapa itu kita belah. Kau sebelah dan aku sebelah. Alangkah indahnya semua itu."

"Kenangan itu akan kubawa pulang."

"Maukah kau menghapus bekas bibirnya di bibirku dengan bibirmu?"

Aku mendekat kepadanya. Kabut tebal datang kepada kami. Begitu tebal kabut itu, seolah kami terbungkus di dalam selimut yang basah. Tak tampak sesuatu pun dalam jarak dua meter. Kelambu kabut itu menutup kami dari pandangan dunia. Kami berguling-guling di atas rumput dalam kepompong kabut.

"Masih adakah bekas yang lain di bagian tubuhmu yang harus kuhapus dengan bagian tubuhku?" bisikku.

Dia menggeliat di dalam kabut. Dicarinya telingaku.

"Tak ada bekas yang lain, yang perlu dihapus, Sayang," bisiknya.

Serpihan kabut menyapu wajah kami bagaikan serbuk embun dipercikkan.

"Apakah kita akan keluar dari kepompong kabut ini sebagai sepasang kupu-kupu?"

“Bekas ini akan kubawa pulang dan akan ada yang menghapusnya. Bagaimana denganmu?” “Akan kutunggu bekas yang baru dibekas yang lama, darimu.”

“Apakah itu mungkin?”

“Mungkin.”

“Aku lima empat dan kau dua-dua. Itu tidak mungkin.”

“Mungkin.”

“Aku Datuk Maringgih dan kau Siti Nurbaya, dalam usia. Apa yang memaksamu?”

“Entahlah. Aku pun tak tahu.”

Kami turun dari puncak bukit itu berpegangan tangan. Dia memegang erat jari-jariku. Dan, aku memegang erat jari-jarinya. Seolah ada lem perekat di antara jari-jari kami.

Kayutanam

1997

Short Stories:

MUSIC ON THE BUS

The inter-city bus sped through the night at its usual steady pace. Half way through the journey, the passengers had just had their meal at the regular stopping place. Outside in the dark, trees covered the right and left of the road. The bus's lights shone on the road as the vehicle ran between the two rows of trees. One after the other, the trees stood like sentries along the way. Occasionally sparks of light gleamed in the darkness, indicating that there was life somewhere outside the bus. The lights of the bus were like a chalk line being scratched across a blackboard.

The white line was continually swallowed by the darkness hidden beneath the bus, but then renewed itself again. Over and over again.

The people on the bus were wide awake. They felt refreshed. The driver turned on the tape-recorder. As the music boomed out, the passengers listened and let their minds drift. Suddenly someone shouted: "Could we have something else? I'd like to listen to some jazz."

"Please, driver," someone else said in support of the proposal. "Let's have some jazz."

"But I don't have any jazz tapes," said the driver.

"I've got the very cassette I want," said the man who had asked for jazz, taking a cassette from his pocket. Jazz boomed throughout the bus.

As soon as the music began, almost immediately, someone else shouted: "Could we have something

else?" The question was directed at the man who wanted to listen to jazz.

"Sure," said the man who had wanted to listen to jazz.

"I'd like to listen to some disco music," said the man who wanted to stop the jazz.

"Please, driver," said the man who had wanted to listen to jazz, "this gentleman doesn't like my jazz. He wants to listen to disco music."

"But I don't have any disco tapes," said the driver.

"I do," said the man, "I've got the very cassette I want." He took a cassette from his pocket and before long disco music boomed throughout the bus.

The passengers listened to the music for a few seconds. Then a passenger sitting in another seat shouted out: "Could we have something else?" His remarks were directed to the man who liked disco music.

"Sure," said the man who liked disco music.

"I'd like to listen to some *keroncong* music."

"Please, driver, this man doesn't like my favourite disco song. He'd like to hear some *keroncong* music."

"But I don't have any *keroncong* tapes," said the driver.

"I do. I've brought my favourite tape with me." He took out a cassette from his pocket. *Keroncong* music boomed out throughout the bus.

The passengers listened to the *keroncong* music for a few seconds. Then a passenger sitting in another seat shouted out: "Could we have something else?"

"Sure," said the man who liked *keroncong* music.

"I'd like to listen to some funky *dangdut* music."

"Please, driver, this gentleman doesn't like *keroncong*. He wants to listen to funky *dangdut* music."

"But I don't have any funky *dangdut* music," said the driver.

"I do. I've brought my favourite tape with me." The man took out a cassette from his pocket. He gave it to the driver and *dangdut* music boomed out throughout the bus.

The passengers listened to the music for a few seconds. Then another passenger shouted out: "Could we have something else?"

"Sure."

"I'd like to listen to some Indonesian pop music."

"But I don't have any Indonesian pop music," said the driver.

"I do. I take my favourite cassette with me everywhere I go." The man took a cassette from his pocket. Soon Indonesian pop music boomed throughout the bus. The passengers listened to the music for a few seconds. Then another passenger shouted: "Could we have something else?"

"Sure," said the man who liked Indonesian pop music.

"I'd like to listen to some classical Javanese music."

"Please, driver, this gentleman doesn't like Indonesian pop music, even though I do. He wants to listen to classical Javanese music."

"But I don't have any classical Javanese music," said the driver.

"I do. I never go anywhere without my cassette of classical Javanese music. It's my favourite. I always bring it with me. Here you are. Classical Javanese music." He handed the tape to the driver.

The passengers listened to the classical Javanese music for a few seconds. Then another passenger shouted out: "Could we have something else?"

"Sure," said the man who liked classical Javanese music.

"I'd like to listen to some West Javanese flute music."

"Please, driver, this gentleman doesn't like classical Javanese music, even though I do. He wants to listen to West Javanese flute music."

"But I don't have any West Javanese flute music," said the driver.

"I do. I never go anywhere without my cassette of West Javanese flute music. It's my favourite. I always bring it with me."

He took the tape from his pocket. Soon West Javanese flute music boomed throughout the bus.

The passengers listened to the West Javanese flute music. But before thirty seconds had passed, another passenger shouted out: "Could we have something else?"

"Sure," said the man who liked West Javanese flute music.

"I'd like to listen to some Minangkabau *saluang*."

"But I don't have any Minangkabau *saluang*," said the driver.

"Ai do. Ai never go anywhere without my village music, Minangkabau *saluang*." He took the tape from his pocket. Minangkabau *saluang* boomed throughout the bus. And then, again, another passenger soon shouted: "Could we have something else?"

"Sure," said the man who liked *saluang* music.

"I'd like to listen to some modern Tapanuli music."

"Please, driver, this gentleman doesn't like *saluang* music, even though Ai do. It's my favourite. He wants to listen to damned Batak music."

"Batak music? Are you trying to insult me?" The man from North Sumatra grabbed the man who had asked for *salmang* music by the collar.

"Never. Ai meant modern Tapanuli music."

"It is just as well that we come from the same island. Otherwise I would have beaten you up."

"Ai thought exactly the same thing; we both come from Sumatra. Otherwise Ai would have beaten you up. Ai don't like people touching my collar. Forgive me. Please, driver, this gentleman wants to listen to modern Tapanuli music."

"But I don't have any modern Tapanuli music."

"I do. I never go anywhere without my favourite music. I like mountain music. Play the tape, driver!"

The man took the tape from his pocket. Modern Tapanuli music boomed throughout the bus. But then, another passenger wanted something else. "Could we have something else?" he shouted.

"Sure, but why? Don't you like modern Tapanuli music?"

"I like military band music!" said the man. He was wearing a green uniform and held a pistol in his hand.

"Please, driver, this gentleman doesn't like modern Tapanuli music, even though I do. It's my favourite. He wants to listen to military band music."

"But I don't have any military band music," said the driver.

"I do. I never go anywhere without my favourite music. Military band music. Play it right now! To the very end! And don't stop before then. I've got a gun."

As soon as the military band music began to boom throughout the bus, another passenger wanted something else. "Could we have something else?" he shouted. He was wearing a green uniform too and he had two pistols.

The man who had asked for military band music looked at him. He saw that the soldier had two pistols.

"Sure. Why not? Sure. You can have something else."

"I want the national anthem!" snapped the second soldier.

"Please, driver, this gentleman doesn't like military band music, even though I do. It always makes me feel like fighting. He wants *Indonesia Raya*."

"But I don't have *Indonesia Raya*."

"What do you have?" said the man in the green uniform with two pistols.

The driver gulped. He opened his box of cassettes. But he couldn't find what he was looking for.

"You must have *Indonesia Raya*! Keep looking! You'd better find it!"

The driver continued sorting through his cassette box. Suddenly he was startled. He seemed to have remembered something.

"I used to have it! But where did I put it? Let me think for a moment. Oh now I remember. Last seventeenth of August, a group of veterans from the War for Independence chartered the bus. They celebrated Independence Day on the bus. They retraced their old campaign trail. The General Sudirman trail. They played military band music the whole way. And *Indonesia Raya* as well. Then, in the middle of the General Sudirman trail, they asked me to stop the bus. I watched them observe a moment of silence. It was very moving. They cried. I knew they were remembering old comrades who had died fighting the colonial troops. Then they asked me to play *Indonesia Raya* again. That's what happened to the tape. I'm positive they didn't ask me to play the song when we reached the 1945 Veterans' Headquarters after our trip along the General Sudirman trail. I remember what they told me as they

presented me with the cassette. 'As you drive along on the seventeenth of August each year, please play *Indonesia Raya* from time to time for your passengers.' I remember now. That is exactly what they said when they gave me the cassette. But where is it? Oh ... the company employs a lot of different assistant drivers. They have their own favourite tapes. I wonder if ...? It's possible. Very possible. They usually come from out of town too. Yes. It is very possible."

The driver stopped the bus. Outside the lights shone on the asphalt. In front of the whole class, the chalk line paused in the middle of the blackboard. The driver eased himself out from behind the steering wheel. Everyone watched him. The two men in green uniforms were motionless. The driver scratched inside a rubbish bin. Lifted the bin up and emptied it onto the floor. Scratched through it again. Finally, he took out a brassiere, a pair of knickers, a sanitary napkin, a tea-bag, some scraps of cloth, pieces of dirty paper, some banana leaves which had been used to wrap food, and a cassette.

"I found it!" he shouted. "What did I tell you? They threw it away!"

"Play it!" said the man in the green uniform with two pistols.

The driver returned to his seat behind the steering wheel. He put the cassette into the tape recorder. *Indonesia Raya* boomed throughout the bus, and the vehicle slowly began its journey once more. But after a few moments of *Indonesia Raya*, another passenger shouted: "Could we have something else?"

He was wearing a green uniform. And had three pistols. One pistol in his right hand. And one pistol on either side of his waist.

The man who had requested *Indonesia Raya* looked at the man with three pistols. Then he looked at

the man with one pistol. Finally he turned and looked at the man with three pistols again. In a clear voice he said: "No! We can't have something else. Everyone has to listen to the whole *Indonesia Raya*."

"But it gives me a headache!" said the man in the green uniform with three pistols.

"What did you say? It gives you a headache? That means you don't love the Motherland!"

"This isn't the right time to play the national anthem."

"It is exactly the right time. Can't you see how parochial everyone was becoming? They were all fighting."

"But *Indonesia Raya* gives me a headache."

"So you are a traitor! You'd better get off the bus!"

"But ..." said the man in the green uniform with three pistols.

"But, you've already paid your fare? Is that what you're trying to say?" said the man in the green uniform with two pistols.

"Yes! I've already paid my fare!"

"I'll give you your money back. And we'll play *Indonesia Raya* until we reach our terminal. If you don't like it, you can get off the bus straight away. There is no room here for anyone who doesn't like the national anthem. Who doesn't like the national anthem?"

"I like it" said the man with one pistol. He moved over next to the man with two pistols. Between them, they now had three pistols.

The man in the green uniform with two pistols stood on a seat. He was followed by the man in a green uniform with one pistol.

"Speak up! Who doesn't like the national anthem?"

"We all like it!" shouted the other passengers.

"There is no room here for anyone who doesn't like the national anthem. None at all!"

"I like it!" said the driver.

The white chalk line scratched its way across the asphalt road. The darkness under the floor continually devoured it. The same thing, again and again.

1981

(Translated by Harry Aveling)

THE CHAMBER POT

We climbed into the police car. I sat beside the woman who had been robbed. The man accused of the robbery sat in front of us. His nose was still bleeding. The security officers who had caught him in the market sat on either side of him, together with one policeman. There was no roof on the car. The wind played with our hair.

A few moments ago the man had been making his way through the crowded market. The woman screamed. I saw the man put something into his mouth as he hurried away. When I pointed him out, the security officers caught him. The mob vented their anger on him. As the car sped away, he wiped the blood from his lips. He didn't dare look up to show the blood which smeared all over his face.

To be honest, there was no proof that he had stolen the woman's property. But I stuck to my story and they arrested him.

Once we reached the police station, the officers began to work him over, so that he would confess. They had their own way of doing these things.

"Did you swallow the necklace?" they demanded.

"No," the man said, bowing his head.

"Did you throw it away?"

"Did you hide it?"

"No."

"Did you give it to an accomplice?"

"That is all he can say: 'No'." They were becoming impatient. "Beat him up!"

They knocked the man out of his chair. He tried to stand up. Clung to a corner of the table. He sat back in the chair again.

"I didn't take anything, Officer."

"That wasn't what I asked. Where did you hide the necklace?"

"He swallowed it," I said.

"Did you see him swallow it?"

"Sure! He put the necklace into his mouth and he swallowed it!" I added the word "necklace" to my previous testimony. In fact, I didn't see what he put into his mouth. But it was too late to stop now.

"Are you sure?"

"I'm positive."

"He put the necklace into his mouth? Was that how it happened?"

The man on the other side of the table typed my testimony onto a piece of paper.

"He did."

"Then he swallowed it?"

"He did."

"How heavy was the necklace?" he asked the woman who had been robbed.

"Fifteen grams," the woman replied.

"Good. I've got everything I need," snapped the senior officer. "I'm convinced by what you say. Now we need to get the necklace out of him. Find some laxatives. Some bananas and pawpaws as well. Make him eat the lot. Make him shit like a bird. We can catch the droppings."

The senior officer left the interrogation room. When the objects he had ordered were ready in the interrogation room, the other police officers called him back again and he returned.

"Make him drink the mixture," he insisted. "Force him. You've got it? Epsom salts?"

"Yes, sir," said one of the subordinates.

"Good. Get ready to catch what comes out!"

They started to make the man to swallow the mixture. But he refused. He wouldn't open his mouth. They used force. They tried to pour the foaming glass of Epsom salts into his mouth. He clenched his jaw. They knocked him out of his chair a second time.

"Drink it! Why won't you drink it?"

He clung to a corner of the table as he tried to get up off the floor.

"Peel the pawpaw. And make sure that he eats it!"

"Which one should we give him first, Captain? The salts or the pawpaw?"

"Give him both. Just make sure you catch whatever comes out of him."

"His whole stomach ..."

"I don't care. Make him drink the salts. And eat the bananas. Or the pawpaw. Be ready for when he wants to go to the toilet!"

They forced the man to open his mouth so that he could swallow the lot.

The violence was starting to make me feel uncomfortable. I asked the senior officer to allow to persuade the man to swallow the salts and eat the fruit. He agreed. The man and I went into a brightly lit room with glass walls. The police stood behind the tinted glass, where we couldn't see them. The woman who had been robbed also stood behind the observation area watching us through glass.

I began to win him over. The dark outside made me feel as though we were in a bedroom on some dark night.

"There are just the two of us here," I tried to assure him. "There is something I need to tell you. If you don't produce the necklace in a hurry, they'll

operate on you." I moved closer to him. "Do you know what I mean – 'operate'? They'll take you to an operating theatre. Before the operation, they will x-ray you to see where the necklace is sitting in your stomach. They'll make you fast for a long time. Then they'll take you to the operating room. And anaesthetise you. Then, when you're unconscious, they'll cut your stomach open. It will be just like cleaning a fish. They'll scrub your guts real hard, because you're hiding something valuable in your stomach. You have to realise that they're not interested in saving your life; they only want the necklace you swallowed. Imagine what might happen if you started to lose a lot of blood. No one will give you their blood. You're a thief! Don't forget: you don't mean a thing to them. They're mad at you for hiding the gold necklace in your guts. It won't be a pretty operation. You don't mean a thing to them. No one will willingly give you their blood. Your family won't be allowed to come and donate blood. They would be too ashamed. Because you're a thief. Your life doesn't mean a thing to them. Once they've found the gold necklace, they'll leave your unconscious body on the operating table. They'll be so delighted, I assure you, that they won't even bother to finish the operation. You'll die, that's what will happen. Why should they bother saving the life of a thief like you? It will be a good way of making sure that there is one less criminal in the world. Kick the bucket. You'll be no better than an old suitcase; they'll empty you out, then throw you away. You'll be stretched out in the morgue and no one will come to pay their last respects."

The man raised his head and looked at me.

"You're still young, my friend. There is so much you can still do with your life. Don't waste it. This is a stupid way to die. They're not interested in saving your life. They just want the gold necklace you swallowed."

"What should I do?" he asked.

"Give them the necklace!" I insisted.

"I don't have it!"

"This is no time for games. It's too late to hide your crime. Don't make them too angry. And don't think that they can't see what we're doing. They can see everything through the two way mirrors. Look at the way their cigarettes burn out there in the dark. Like eyes spying on us. Please drink the mixture. Quickly! Are you afraid of going to the toilet?"

He grabbed the glass of salts and gulped it down as if it were a cup of coffee. Then he gobbled down the pawpaw and bananas.

"The more pawpaw you eat, the sooner you'll get rid of it!"

A guard opened the glass door.

"Do you want to go to the toilet?" he asked.

"Be patient. He isn't ready yet. Can you come back in a little while, officer?"

"Of course! If he doesn't like Indonesian pawpaws, we have some from Thailand. Top quality!" He closed the glass door again.

Before long, the officer returned once more. Two policeman entered, carrying a screen and two chamber pots. The screen was intended to function as a toilet. If the man wanted to go to the toilet, he could go behind the screen and shit. For their own reasons, they ordered him to take off all his clothes, except for his underpants. They told him to go behind the screen when he needed to use the chamber pots.

The guards and I left the glass room. We watched from behind the mirror, and waited for him to shit into the pots.

A guard entered the glass room carrying a loud speaker and took a pot when the man held it out from behind the screen. The guard appeared to examine the

contents of the chamber pot with a stick. He then reported what he could see in the pot.

"Nothing yet! Only some soybean seeds. He must have been eating fried soybean cake."

The guard came out carrying the pot, and passed it to another policeman who emptied it into the latrine.

The thief asked for a new pot. Then the man with the loud speaker entered the glass room a second time and took the pot which the man offered him from behind the screen. Using the loud speaker, the guard shouted: "Still nothing! More soybean seeds. And something like shreds of fibre. I think it is boiled yam."

In the fullness of time, the same thing was repeated once more. Meanwhile, we waited behind the two way mirror as the pots were emptied into the latrine ten times. The stick could not find the necklace. The woman who owned the necklace became bored. She rang her husband. Before long, he came. He joined us behind the mirror. The man held out the pot at increasingly shorter periods, but the fifteen gram gold necklace was not in his shit. As we waited, the screen suddenly shifted and crashed to the floor. The man fell on top of the screen. He was unable to stand up. He was exhausting after shitting so many times.

The husband came to his own decision. He told his wife to withdraw her accusation. She did. She withdrew the accusation. She apologised to the police for possibly accusing the wrong man of stealing her necklace.

They took the man to the bathroom and washed him. The accusation was withdrawn. The woman apologised to him. I apologised to him. The police apologised to him. He was free.

Feeling guilty, I helped him out of the police station. I carried him to a taxi, apologising the whole way. I felt in my pocket. I gave him some money to

quieten the sense of guilt that I was feeling. The man wept as he took the money.

"Buy some food. You'll need lots of vitamins to make yourself feel better again. I am really very, very sorry."

He folded the money.

"Thank you, sir. You're a good man."

"Don't say that. It was all my fault you got into trouble. My testimony was untrue. Please forgive me, my friend."

We were both quiet for the rest of the journey. Then he asked to be let out at the lane where he lived. I helped him out of the taxi. I shook his hand.

"Please forgive me, friend. I feel very guilty. The ten thousand rupiahs are no recompense for how I feel. Can you stand up? Do you want to go the rest of the way home in a trishaw? Do you want me to come with you?"

"There's no need for that, sir. Thank you."

He seemed unable to stop crying as he stood on the pavement shaking. I let him be. I got back into the taxi. He closed the taxi door. I held my hand out through the taxi window to farewell him. I still felt that I had not done enough to alleviate my guilt. So I repeated what I'd already said: "Please forgive me, my friend. Buy yourself some food so you feel better soon. I really did the wrong thing. I'll never do it again."

The tears mingled with the blood on his cheeks. He brushed them away. He bowed his head. His face was black and blue.

"You told the truth. There is no need to feel guilty." He bowed his head even further, as though he were trying to hide his face. "You're a good man. I must tell you everything. My son is very sick. We need the money. My wife has given up all hope. We can't pay the doctor." Suddenly he looked up. "You told the truth.

You're a good man. I must tell you everything." He bowed his head again. "I'm not a thief. But I did take the necklace. I passed it three times, and swallowed it again each time." Slowly he released my hand. He looked at me.

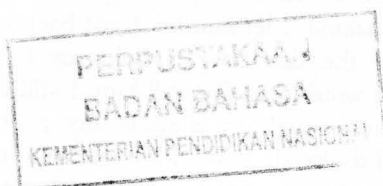
"You're a good man, sir. I deserve to be punished." He groped in his pocket for the money I had given him. Perhaps he wanted to give it back to me.

"In that case, you'll need another chamber pot," I told him.

I let him keep the ten thousand rupiah. I ordered the taxi to drive away. I had to, before I changed my mind. I felt that it was the right thing to do.

1982

(Translated by Harry Aveling)



DO YOU WANT TO REMOVE THE MARKS OF HIS LIPS ON MY LIPS WITH YOUR LIPS?

A young woman stood suspiciously at the edge of the deck, holding onto the ship's railing. She seemed to be about to commit suicide by leaping into the ocean. Some of the crew tried to approach her, wanting to stop her reckless behaviour, but she threatened to jump immediately if they came any closer. Pretending that I wanted to find the best position for taking her photograph, I approached her with my camera. Eventually I was close enough to be able to talk to her.

"Please tell me why you want to commit suicide?" I asked, hoping to attract her attention.

She continued to stare at a distant island, far across the sea. Perhaps someone had shattered all her dreams and they could no longer be mended.

"Please tell me everything. I might be able to write a story about this."

The woman ignored me. The wind played with the tips of her hair. The sleeves of her blouse. It seemed that she was ready to act on her reckless decision. Suddenly she took off a shoe and pointed it at the sea.

"He gave me this," she said, throwing the shoe away. As the shoe neared the sea, I preserved its image for all eternity with my camera.

Then she reached for a finger on her left hand. The ring sparkled in the sunlight as the rays spread from its diamond. She held the ring over the ship's rail. The

wild waves beat against the side of the boat. Her hand shook violently.

"He gave me this," she said, letting go of the ring.

"I want to throw everything I have, everything he gave me, into the sea. Today I'm wearing every single thing he ever gave me. I'm going to take them all off and throw them into the sea. When I drown at the bottom of the ocean, I don't want to be wearing a single thing he gave me. Not one single thing. We met for the first time on this boat and now I want to throw everything away."

The woman began to unbutton her blouse. She took off her clothes and threw them one by one into the sea. The ritual undressing ended when she disposed of her underwear. She threw everything into the sea.

"I don't want to wearing anything he gave me when I drown at the bottom of the sea. The water can be my shroud. The salt can cover my corpse."

The naked young woman lifted a foot over the rail and prepared to jump. I aimed my camera at her. The sight in my lens was fantastic! A naked young woman, standing at the edge of the deck, with the waves of the ocean and the seagulls behind her. I could see the tiny black silhouette of the distant island in my lens as well. As she prepared to jump, unexpectedly she turned towards to me. It seemed that she had just thought of something she needed to tell me, before ending her life in the ocean.

"It isn't as easy to get rid of everything as I thought it would be," she said. "There is still something I need to get rid of." She was quiet for a moment, as she looked at the distant black speck in the ocean. After staring at the horizon for a long time, she said softly: "The marks of his lips on mine. I can't just throw them away." She turned towards me. There was a gentleness in her eyes. For a long time, her eyes hovered as she

gazed in my direction. "Do you want to remove the marks of his lips on my lips with your lips?" she asked me hesitantly.

I was startled by her request. Very startled. The request made no sense at all. It seemed to come from the very depths of her disappointment. I twisted my lens to bring her face into closer focus. She had carefully applied a dark red lipstick with just a touch of gold to her lips, suggesting a far greater beauty than she had so far shown.

"I refuse to take the marks of his lips with me to the bottom of the ocean. Do you want to remove the marks of his lips from my lips with your lips? Please. I want to get rid of everything."

All around us, people were nailed to where they stood. They shouted: "Kiss her! Kiss her!"

Someone appeared at the doorway carrying an opened blanket, ready to cover the young woman's naked body.

"Please help me. Help me get rid of everything. I don't want to die at the bottom of the ocean with the imprint of his lips still on mine. Please."

"Kiss her! Kiss her!"

I approached the woman. The man with the blanket ran towards us and covered us. Inside the blanket, I searched for her ear and whispered: "Do I need to kiss you anywhere else on your body to remove the mark of his lips?"

"My name is Chechen, Sir," the woman says as she introduces herself to me. I have finished my reading and am mingling with the audience. "I'm a fan of yours. A final year literature student at the university. I'm really pleased to meet you. I've read lots of your stories."

"Thank you. Chechen? That isn't a West Sumatran name, is it?"

"What happens next in the story?"

"You have to decide. All of you. All my listeners."

We are friends from that moment. I feel like a young man again. We go everywhere together. The campus at Kayutanam. To Danau Singkarak, Desa Belimbing, Batusangkar, Bukittinggi, Lembah Harau, Tabek Patah, Kota Gadang, Danau Maninjau, Ngalau Indah, Lubang Jepang, Ngarai Sianok, Lembah Anai and Istana Pagaruyung.

Tomorrow is to be my last day in Kayutanam. Before I return to my routine life in Jakarta. We decide to spend our final hours at a tourist spot outside the town of Padangpanjang. It is like a garden and contains small shelters which are built like replicas of the local Minangkabau style of housing. The garden is next to the Minangkabau Museum and Library. Rain falls frequently in Padangpanjang and a soft mist covers the ground. We look for somewhere to sit among the chairs and round tables which are provided for visitors. Below us runs a small stony brook. Mount Merapi towers over us. All of the tiny shelters are occupied by young couples gazing at the valley and the slopes of the volcano. Sheets of mist continually pass across the hill, like the smoke from a forest fire.

Eventually we sit on the grass, next to a real Minangkabau house.

"We have been together every single moment for the past five days. Each night we have sat in coffee-shops, gazing at each other while our coffee grew cold. You told me about how you write. I told you stories about the different places we were to visit the next day. We didn't care that people looked at us. We didn't care what they said. You held my hand. I rested my head on your shoulder in the cold air of Kayutanam. All we will have will be our memories. You will go home tomorrow and I will return to the campus."

"Tomorrow we will go to Lubang Jepang. To a dark cave. We will enter the cave and no one will see us go in. I will say that it feels as though we are entering the bridal chamber. You will ask me to blow out the candle. We will climb to the top and watch the waterfall. Everything will be very far away and very silent. We will let the monkeys come close to us and ignore them. A vendor will bring you a young coconut cut open at the top, and two straws. We will ignore him as he leaves us to enjoy the fresh coconut milk you have asked for. There will only be the two of us. Completely alone. Drinking the fresh coconut milk through two straws. One for you and one for me. Sometimes our foreheads will touch as we drink. We will forget which is your straw and which is mine. It won't matter. Sometimes we will use separate straws, sometimes the same straw. I will gaze into your eyes. You will gaze into mine. Our eyes will say things that our mouths dare not speak."

"We will divide the coconut into two. One half for me, one half for you. It will all be very beautiful."

"I shall carry the memory of it with me when I return home."

"Do you want to remove the marks of his lips on my lips with your lips?"

I move closer to her. A thick mist covers us. It is so thick that we feel as though we are wrapped in a moist blanket. We can't see beyond two metres. No one can see us beneath our net of mist. We roll on the grass in our cocoon of mist.

"Are there any other marks on your body which I must remove with my body?"

She stretches out in the mist and reaches for my ear.

"None. None at all, my darling."

Drops of mist splash on our faces like dew.

"Will we be two butterflies when we emerge from this cocoon of mist?"

"When I return home, the marks will be covered over. What about you?"

"I'll wait for new prints on top of the old ones. From you."

"Is that possible?"

"It is."

"I'm fifty-five. You're twenty-two. It's not possible."

"It's possible."

"I'm as old as Datuk Meringgih in the melodrama, and you're as young as Siti Nurbaya. Why would you wait?"

"I don't know. I really don't."

We descend the hill still holding hands. She holds my fingers tightly. I hold her fingers tightly. It is as if we are glued together.

Kayutanam 1997

(Translated by Harry Aveling)

Dewan Juri Pemilihan Sastrawan Indonesia
Penerima Hadiah Sastra Asia Tenggara 2008
Panel for the Selection of the Indonesia Awardee
of The S.E.A. Write Awards 2008

Penanggung Jawab/Official Charge:

Dr. Dendy Sugono

Kepala Pusat Bahasa, Departemen Pendidikan Nasional
Head of The National Language Center,
Ministry of National Education

Ketua/Chairman:

Prof. Dr. Abdul Hadi W.M.

Universitas Paramadina

Sekretaris/Secretary:

Prof. Melani Budianta, Ph.D.

Fakultas Ilmu Pengetahuan Budaya, Universitas
Indonesia

Faculty of Cultural and Science, University of Indonesia

Anggota/Members:

Prof. Drs. Jakob Sumardjo

Sastrawan/Writer

Prof. Dr. Boen S. Oemarjati

Fakultas Ilmu Pengetahuan Budaya, Universitas
Indonesia

Faculty of Cultural and Science, University of Indonesia

Drs. Abdul Rozak, M.A.

Pusat Bahasa, Departemen Pendidikan Nasional

National Language Center, Ministry of National
Education

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